

(TMI Focus, Vol. XXXI, Nos. 1 & 2, Winter/Spring 2009)

BOOK REVIEW

Rosalind A. McKnight. *Cosmic Journeys: My Out-of-Body Explorations with Robert A. Monroe*. Charlottesville, Va.: Hampton Roads, 1999. 292 pp. \$11.96.

Soul Journeys: My Guided Tours through the Afterlife. Charlottesville, Va.: Hampton Roads, 2005. xiii + 250 pp. \$11.96.

Reviewed by Matthew Fike, PhD

“We feel an urgency to get the material through so that it can get into written form, and thereby into the consciousness level of souls who are in need of growth and are searching for new inspiration and openings into their higher selves.”¹ This quotation, which is spoken by a nonphysical entity through Rosalind McKnight in Robert Monroe’s research laboratory, nicely encapsulates the overall purpose of the two books under review in this issue. To that end, *Cosmic Journeys* and *Soul Journeys* provide a formidable and comprehensive cosmology that includes the consciousness of plants, animals, and the earth itself; multiple destinations in the afterlife, including “The Patrick Event”; the author’s own birth and preexistence; alien spaceships; Monroe’s death, which frames the first book; and the distant future of our planet.

Cosmic Journeys is the result of the author’s work as one of Monroe’s Explorers between 1971 and 1982. Its twenty-four chapters—divided into sections that correspond to parts of the “Gateway Affirmation”—are mostly dialogues between Monroe and either Rosie herself or guides who speak through her. Chapter 19, though, is typed as it is channeled, a technique that she employs throughout *Soul Journeys*, most of which is recorded at a computer keyboard as her guide, Radiant Lady, takes her on a tour of the afterlife. The author’s body functions “as a transmitting set between dimensions,” and the material has an immediacy and a conversational quality that result from her rare ability to report psychic events as she experiences them.

Cosmic Journeys not only describes the origin of numerous meditative techniques taught at The Monroe Institute® but also sheds light on several passages from Monroe’s second book, *Far Journeys*. It is interesting, however, that a wide variety of theological material conveyed by Rosie’s Guides did not make it into the Institute’s course cosmology or Monroe’s writings. At the very least, this pattern of references reflects Rosie’s MDiv degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Along with echoes of biblical language (especially Paul’s image of seeing “through a glass darkly” and the twin principles “Ask and you shall receive,” “Seek and you shall find”), the Guides stress, among many other important points, that God is pure love energy, that the fall is separation, that salvation means emulating Jesus who “came from the

highest God-energy” to teach unconditional love, and that prayer and thanksgiving are important to spiritual development.

The fuller cosmology laid out in *Cosmic Journeys* is a treasure trove to which no brief review can do proper justice, but a sampling of concepts most interesting to TMI readers will provide a sense of what awaits between its covers. A fundamental principle is that “all that is exists within.” Thus the key to accessing “universal knowledge” is to look within to the five levels of consciousness or vibration. From lowest to highest, these are “the physical, etheric-substance, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels.” The lower levels are subject to time and fear; the higher levels—beyond time—correspond to realms of love. Human beings can separate from the physical at the etheric-substance level up to the spirit level. For example, if separation occurs at the mental level, the mental and spiritual levels separate, while the etheric-substance and emotional levels remain with the physical body. The more levels are left behind, the safer the physical body remains. The five-level system also suggests that there is no genuine OBE (only phase shifting) and accounts for how we can travel during sleep but not remember doing so: unless one lives consciously in the “higher energy state of two and a half and beyond,” one is unlikely to remember the experience.

Whereas the afterlife is a subset of *Cosmic Journeys*, it is the author’s exclusive focus in *Soul Journeys*, a title that anticipates phrases like “soul journeys back to our original forms” and “journey back to the Godhead.” The book’s purpose is to help people realize that there is no death and to counsel self-recognition, faith, hope, and joy. More so than the first book, *Soul Journeys* provides snapshots from Rosie’s life: various jobs, her nine-acre farm, her love of cats and dogs who play supporting roles in the drama Here and There, and even a past lifetime in which she was sacrificed by a high priest (her ex-husband in this lifetime). With brutal honesty, she narrates the darkest period of her life when, in Europe, she nearly committed suicide but was saved when her beloved guide AhSo from *Cosmic Journeys* intervened. Since that nearly fatal moment, she has lived in the “eternal presence of God,” which may partially explain her talent for channeling spiritual beings. Her close brush with suicide illustrates two principles that reappear throughout the book: the Disconnect Principle (disconnection from God and others is bad) and the Chaos Principle (when everything “seems to fall apart, it’s simply coming together at a higher level”). Of course, *Soul Journeys* includes a variety of other interesting psychic experiences as well. The most notable are Rosie’s reunion with her brother Larry, who was killed at a young age in an automobile accident; face-to-face meetings with AhSo, Patrick, and various pets in the afterlife; a visit to Monroe’s heavenly conference center; and a Dantesque scene in the Dark Realm where stuck souls self-punish according to their own negative thought forms.

Soul Journeys describes a soul’s incarnation as a circular journey from the spirit world to the Earth and back again. Highlights of this process include a life contract with an Earth Council, guidance while on Earth, and an automatic life review upon return to the spirit world. Most

souls migrate to Summerland (a subset of which is the Park known to *LIFELINE*® participants)—a realm of love, joy, and pleasure, where souls engage in learning, hobbies, and service. Over and over again, Rosie's Guides stress a variety of key points about this soul journey. Suicide is a great no-no because it breaks one's contract with God. We must clear ourselves of addictions while on Earth and live joyfully and meaningfully so that we may die peacefully and ascend to the level of our highest energy. Thought is incredibly important because "we attract everything to ourselves by the way we think." God energy or spirit is the only thing that is real. And as in Platonic philosophy, everything on Earth originates on the spiritual plane.

Residing in the background of Rosie's two books are not only Dante and Plato but also the English poet John Milton. *Cosmic Journeys* makes four references to the point that Milton has the angel Raphael tell Adam and Eve: "And from these corporal nutriments perhaps / Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit, / Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend / Ethereal." The implication of this happy thought is that the Earth and all who live on her will eventually, through spiritual ascension, come to enjoy some of the qualities that *Soul Journeys* associates primarily with the afterlife. Living well in love and joy is therefore of utmost importance. Perhaps Rosie will say more about this in her next book, which her Guides, she says in the final chapter, are ready to download through her fingertips—*Earth Journeys: Spirit-World Guidance for Living in the Here and the Hereafter*. In the meantime, readers will find much of interest in the two volumes already published, which rival Monroe's trilogy for depth and breadth of insight, come highly recommended, and are virtually indispensable reading for serious metaphysicians.

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¹ For the sake of simplicity, all quotations within quotations in this review appear in a single set of quotation marks.

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